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A NIGHT ON THE TOP OF ST PAUL'S.

I HAD long entertained the idea that a night spent on the top of St Paul's Cathedral would give one an opportunity of observing certain peculiar and interesting effects, which would well repay one for the slight amount of inconvenience consequent on passing the night in that elevated position. Choosing, therefore, a favourable time when the sky was clear, and the glass at 'set-fair,' I obtained the requisite permission from the cathedral authorities, and having made arrangements with the very obliging chief verger, I presented myself, in company with two friends, at the north door of the cathedral, at about eight o'clock on a certain evening in August last. We had provided ourselves with something to eat and drink, plenty of wraps and overcoats, a telescope, a good binocular, a dark-lantern, and a thermometer; and thus fortified, we proceeded at once up the long flights of stairs to the golden gallery, where we proposed to pass the night.

We had the privilege, however, of retiring to the interior of the dome as often as we wished; and on a small but convenient landing, some forty or fifty steps from the top, where there was just room for three people, very closely packed side by side, we spread our rugs, for the purpose of lying down when we felt inclined. The last gleams of daylight were still lingering in the north-western sky when we first emerged from the small doorway opening on to the golden gallery; but even at that early period of the night, the sight which met our gaze below was one of those which dwell in the memory for a lifetime. Thousands of lamps were gleaming like stars immediately below us, and spreading for miles around. London was literally mapped out in gleaming jets; the long lines of the streets, the Holborn Viaduct, the Thames Embankment, the course of the river, and the bridges, all shewing with marvellous distinctness. The railway stations presented a remarkable appearance, forming with their multitudinous lamps bright constellations amid the hosts of lights below. The effect, too, was pleasingly diversified

by the many bright red signal-lights which stood out in vivid contrast to the whiter clusters around. As the darkness deepened, we could discern the lights farther and farther away, until they could be traced even on the distant heights of Highgate, where they melted away to mingle at last with the stars, which by this time were gleaming from all parts of the heavens. It seemed as though we had been suddenly transported to some point in space, from which we could gaze upon the starry hosts both above and below us.

We were remarkably fortunate in being favoured on this night of all others with a fine effect of aurora borealis. At about eleven o'clock, the northern sky brightened, and soon after some fine white streamers shot upwards towards the zenith, varied by those beautiful and mysteriously shifting crimson lights, which so enhance the beauty of these auroral displays, coming and going like blushes on the cheek of a brunette, if I may be allowed the simile, without, as Mr. Weller says, 'verging on the poetical.' Up to a late period of the night, in addition to the lamps of the streets, railways, and bridges, there were of course myriads of gleams from windows, skylights, and doorways spread over the vast masses of houses between the principal streets; but as midnight approached, these died out one by one, until, in the small-hours of the morning, the only lights visible were those of the main thoroughfares and the railway stations, which now stood out from the surrounding gloom with increased brilliancy. The dark interspaces in which, as the moon had set, not the faintest outline of a roof or chimney could be traced, presented a very solemn aspect. It seemed as if all human habitations had been blotted out, and nothing but a black void existed where so late the signs of activity and life shone out from far and near.

We had been very curious to know whether the street noises would entirely cease. I was hoping, indeed, that at some period of the night or morning there might be a cessation of all sounds, so that we might have enjoyed the solemn stillness from our novel and isolated position. In this, however, we were destined to be disappointed. There was never

a single moment throughout the night when the sounds wholly ceased. Of course, when we first emerged into the gallery, the familiar deafening roar of the busy streets rose up to us with startling distinctness in the still evening air. Towards midnight, however, these had considerably diminished, and we thought, at any rate, that the traffic within the city-proper would certainly cease after the latest trains had arrived and departed; but this was not the case. Towards two o'clock the *continuous* roar had almost entirely ceased, but the sounds from single cabs or carriages still disturbed the ear which was really longing for rest. The Hansoms were the chief enemies to repose. Throughout the whole night we could see their lamps flitting along like fire-flies amid the gloom, across a distant bridge, or along a neighbouring street. Once or twice the sound even of these had almost died away, when a far-off railway whistle struck upon the ear, or a market wagon came lumbering along the roadway immediately beneath us in St Paul's Churchyard. I had also anticipated an entire cessation of light and sound at the railway stations, but trains of one kind or another seemed to continue throughout the night, and the lights were not perceptibly diminished. The most prominent among the stations visible were Waterloo, Farringdon Street, Broad Street, and London Bridge. The huge roof of Cannon Street obscured the station lights, and obstructed also the lights on London Bridge. A notable exception to the gloom of the spaces between the streets was the light from the various printing-offices. Printing-house Square, the *Telegraph* Office, and many others, which we did not recognise, shone out vividly from the surrounding gloom; and long before day-break, the puffs of steam issuing from their roofs told of the busy machines and the thousands of active hands labouring through the night to meet the demands of the multitudes who would pour forth at early morning with that insatiable appetite for news which is so marked a characteristic of the present generation.

One of the most curious effects was the sound of the various clocks; and as there were some twenty of them within hearing which persisted in striking the hours and quarters throughout the night, they certainly did their utmost to dispel the hope we had entertained of a period of comparative quiet. Some minor clocks in the immediate vicinity commenced several seconds before the real time, like dropping shots from skirmishers before a battle. These rapidly increased, until presently the deep boom of Big Ben rolled towards us on the still air; but almost before the ear had caught the sound, the full voice of St Paul's answered the challenge, and sent forth its deafening tones, which in the dead of night seemed literally to shake the building. In these two all other sounds seemed for the time merged, but long after they had ceased, the 'clamour and the clangour of the bells' was continued from many a steeple far and near. One villainous little chime—out of charity, I forbear to mention its name—struck up with a harsh dissonant tone, long after the others had all ceased, as if it were not satisfied to join in the general chorus, but must display its vain incompetence in the most prominent and irritating manner possible.

I had been hoping that my companions would feel the necessity of seeking some repose, so that

I might for a time be left to my own solitary musings over the novelty of my position at the dead of night. And so it happened. For about an hour I was left in undisturbed possession of the gallery, and sitting alone in one of the niches gazing on the scene below, many solemn thoughts of the present and the past of necessity filled my mind. Thoughts of the thousands sleeping below, seeking oblivion from the throbs of pleasure and of pain that would recommence with fresh vitality on the morrow—thoughts of the anxious watchers by sick-beds longing eagerly for the dawn and the renewed life which comes with the morning light; or perhaps (as it needs must be in hundreds of homes beneath my very gaze) to look upon the face of death—of distant revels, prolonged through the night—of brains still busy by the midnight lamp—of the intrigues, the vice, and the squalid poverty of this vast city. Unconsciously, too, my mind drifted into the past, recalling the time when all London lay within a good bow-shot of the place where I sat, and Old St Paul's stood with its square tower on this very spot, before the magnificent creation of immortal Wren had entered into his busy brain, or the hope (destined to be realised) of seeing his labour completed. Thoughts, too, of that fatal year came back, when a gazer, placed where I now was, might have looked upon miles of fire consuming a plague-stricken city, and with its seething, roaring tide licking up the old cathedral itself, as easily as the advancing flood consumes a child's mimic fortress; and as the bell again chimed the hour, I recalled the story of the sentry at distant Windsor who heard the old clock strike thirteen, thus proving that he could not have been asleep on his post, and thereby saved his life.

At this point I was interrupted by the return of one of my friends from his nap on the landing, yawning dreadfully, and looking decidedly 'seedy' in the dull light which was beginning to appear in the east. Snatching half an hour's sleep myself, I returned to the gallery, in anticipation of the effect which I hoped would prove the most interesting we had witnessed—namely, sunrise over the smokeless city, and the view of London to its farthest limits. The morning light had considerably increased, creeping cool and gray over the house-tops, revealing their roofs and chimneys once more, and causing the innumerable churches around to stand out with startling distinctness. A curious effect might now be observed in the streets below still lit by the gas, and which, by contrast with the cold light of morning on the innumerable house-tops, appeared of a deep orange colour, or as if the streets had been strewn with red sand. Sounds of human life, too, began to increase. The red post-office vans were in full activity; the early coffee stall-keepers were wending their way to their several stations; the wagons were increasing in numbers; and the pedestrians were beginning to throng the streets, even at this early hour. The river presented a beautiful appearance. It was as calm as a mirror, and every bridge, boat, and barge was reflected in the most marvellous manner from the unruffled surface. Presently, the dim outline of the hills around Highgate began to loom through the mist, and I fondly imagined that my hopes of being able to see the country all round London were about to be realised. Alas! man is doomed to disappointment! The sun rose

with unusual majesty and glory—the sky overhead was one mass of blue and gold ; but uprising with the sun came a white and envious mist creeping onward from the east, shutting out with a dense veil every object beyond the radius of half a mile, and at once dispelling every hope of a panoramic view, before the smoke, which already began to curl up from many a chimney, should come to supersede, or mingle with the mist. Uttering a groan over our disappointment, yet by no means regretting our novel undertaking, we descended from our lofty eminence, and, bag in hand, emerged from the cathedral, exciting, if the truth must be told, the suspicious glances of more than one early policeman, as we wended our way to the nearest Metropolitan station.

MURPHY'S MASTER.

CHAPTER V.—TWO HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD.

It was some minutes before Mr Murphy returned, and when he did so, it was without the broadsheet, for which he said the man had charged such an exorbitant sum, that he refused to give it. At this, Mrs Mulvaney grumbled, observing, justly enough, that the extravagance would not have affected Mr Murphy's purse, but her own, while the broadsheet would have been a very entertaining piece of literature with which to beguile the evening. However, the very first thing in the morning she would buy the newspaper, where the authentic account of the transaction would be duly chronicled.

'That's if it ever occurred at all,' Mrs Mulvaney,' said Murphy, with a short laugh, 'which is more than doubtful ;' and at the same time Robert felt a significant pressure on his foot, as though a broad-wheeled wagon was passing over his toe, which certainly did not emanate from the lady of the house. The conversation here took another turn, and settled upon a subject very frequently discussed under that roof, namely, emigration. Many an Irish lad who left London for the Far West, or the still farther antipodes, had taken his last meal (and that not seldom gratis) at *Mulvaney's*, and poured his hopes and fears into the ears of the friendly widow. Of only a very small minority of these she had ever heard again, but what she had heard, had given her a favourable impression of 'foreign parts,' which was her somewhat indefinite geographical expression for all countries that were not England or Ireland. She had therefore been always an upholder of emigration ; while Murphy, who held a strong opinion not only that Ireland was for the Irish, but for no one else, and especially the English, had always opposed it. On this occasion, however, to her great surprise, and perhaps not little to her disappointment, for she rather enjoyed an assault of arms with Dick, since it always ended in an embracing of them, her arguments met with small opposition. He allowed that there might be cases—of convenience, he would not say of compulsion—when it would be beneficial to leave his native land, and allowed that it would be somewhat hard upon the outside world—the inhabitants of which he seemed to look upon, like the Chinese, as barbarians—if it should never have the advantage of being leavened by a few specimens of Irishmen. On the subject of the national excellencies, as compared with the merits of inferior races, it was indeed impossible that there

should be disagreement between them ; but these were little matters of detail on which they differed just sufficiently to give piquancy to the conversation. Mrs Mulvaney was of opinion that Irish folks should make their way in the world like other people, but this view Murphy strongly combated. There were certain chiefs of that noble race, such as the young master, who had a natural right to land and goods, independently of inheritance—this was not quite clearly explained, but somehow 'the blood did it'—and again it was only natural that such an acknowledged the authority of the said chieftains should look to them for support. Robert Chesney, though a good scholar of the village-school pattern, knew nothing of political economy, and yet these opinions of Mr Murphy sounded hollow, or, at least, as though there was but little in them ; but it was astonishing with what fire and fervour they were advocated. Every glass of whisky that Mr Murphy swallowed—and he swallowed a good many—seemed to strengthen his conviction, though by no means to assist him in expressing it with perspicuity. If anybody had contradicted him, matters might have been very different, but as it was, he was affable and friendly. Every now and then he would wink at Robert with a sagacity that seemed the concentration of all the sense that remained in him, and which left him poor indeed.

'Come, Mr Murphy, you have had enough,' said the widow presently. 'Nay'—for he had made a snatch at the spirit-bottle, but not being in a condition favourable for the calculation of distance, missed it—'I am mistress here ; and though I can't send you to bed like a child, though you are no wiser than a child, and deserve to be whipped, you shall have no more to drink,' with which she tucked the bottle under her arm, and triumphantly marched off.

'She thinks I'm dhruke,' observed Mr Murphy confidentially, and winking more sagaciously than ever at his young friend.

'I confess I'— Robert was about to add that he himself had rather leaned to that opinion, when the other interrupted him impatiently :

'Tchut, lad ; do you take Dick Murphy for a fool, that he should get dhruke when he had a say-cret to keep, and with a woman as he's sweet on in the room ! No, no ; it is not a few glasses of such poor stuff as that as could hurt me. I wanted to put her off the scent, that's all. She'll be thinking half the night, d' ye see, whether I've put my candle out, or under the bed, and wonder whether the house is on fire, instead of concerning herself about our affairs. If she had got hold of that broadsheet, there might have been the deuce to pay. Them patrols are dead, lad.'

'Good heavens !' ejaculated Robert, greatly shocked. 'And was that what the man was hallooing about ?'

'Of course, it was ; and he was calling it *murder*, too ; mind that.'

'It was a cruel and infamous act, anyway,' said the boy excitedly, 'that putting the tree across the road, just after you yourself had been saved from the same peril, and I am glad I had no part in it.'

'Oh, *that's* your game, is it ?' cried the other grimly. 'You think you are free of it, do you, while others have to pay the shot ? Well, let me tell you, you're most infernally mistaken there. We're all in the same boat, we three. You're

what they call an accessory after the fact. They've got your name in it all regular.'

'My name!' ejaculated Robert, in horror, his thoughts instantly flying to the cottage in the forest, and picturing Lizzy's face when she should come to hear such tidings of her lover. 'But no ; that is impossible : you are lying to me.'

'Don't you use such hard words, my young fighting-cock, or you will get hard blows in answer,' said Murphy menacingly. 'If they haven't got your name, they've got your description as like as life. If the gallows bear fruit at all, it will bear three : two goodly Irish apples, that's me and the young master (which the saints forbid !), and one little English crab, which is yourself. So, what I say is, be careful ; lie snug as a mouse, and open your lips to nobody about what happened last night till you have put a thousand miles of salt sea between you and English land.'

Murphy waited for a moment, as if expecting a reply, but receiving none, gave a surly nod of his head by way of 'good-night,' and marched, not very steadily, out of the room. Robert listened mechanically to his heavy footsteps as they staggered up-stairs, and to the violent closing of his bedroom door. The news he had just heard had deprived him not only of speech, but of the power of rational reflection. Unlikely—impossible, indeed—as it was that he should be thus fatally associated, and above all so soon, with his companions of a few hours, he did not doubt it in the least ; and the shock was overwhelming. Here seemed an end to all the bright prospects that he had so fondly pictured to himself, since he was to begin life, 'if not as a felon, still (what was as bad for the result) under the imputation of being one. If his name had really been mentioned—and here the ingenuous Mr Murphy (through ignorance of the fanciful value which some people put upon their reputations) had been within a very little of precipitating the very catastrophe he would have averted—Robert would perhaps have gone straight to the nearest police-station and given himself up, the better to clear himself hereafter. But since it was only his description that was thus advertised, might it not be well to take this ruffian's advice, and leave the country so soon as opportunity offered ? Ignorant of all the methods of criminal procedure as he was, it struck him that if he could once escape from the clutches of the law, he would be safe ; he was rapidly growing out of the boy, and in a few years recognition of his person—if only his name should not transpire—would be impossible. He was innocent, it is true ; but it might be difficult to prove himself so, and especially without compromising his companions. To be sure, it was only Murphy that was really guilty of the crime in question ; but he had passed his word to be silent concerning the night's doings, and, if possible, he would keep it. Any disclosure of them would moreover implicate Mr Kavanagh in that former proceeding—he did not know what it was, but could not but conclude that it was some transgression of the law—which had led up to the present catastrophe, and his feelings towards that gentleman were very warm and grateful. Upon the whole, therefore, and after long pondering, he decided to take Murphy's advice, though perfectly well aware that it had been dictated by the most unblushing selfishness ; and somewhat relieved by having come to this conclusion, he

dragged his weary limbs to bed and slept as only the young can sleep when trouble sits by the pillow.

With the first light of dawn, however, he awoke (not of himself, as it turned out, but probably at the opening of the street-door), and hearing a heavy footfall in the silent street, cautiously put aside the window-blind, and looked out. His first idea, rechauffé from what his imagination had fed upon the previous night, was that it was a policeman, or even rural officers of justice, with whom, of course, he was alone familiar, affect that pompous and measured tread, which, however assuring to the householder, is certainly premonitory to the thief ; but it was not a policeman, and indeed might be said to be somebody very much the reverse, for it was Mr Richard Murphy. This gentleman, to whom the *vin ordinaire* of his native country might not only be said to be meat, drink, and clothing (for while imbibing it, he felt the lack of none of them), but also sleep, was standing in front of the house, with a smiling countenance, and *wiping his mouth with the back of his hand*. The morning was damp, and there was slight drizzle falling, which perhaps was welcome to him, as reminding him of the weather in his native clime ; at all events, it did not disturb him : he looked up the street and down the street with cheerful serenity, and was just about to add his contribution to the incense-breathing morn, by lighting a short black dudheen, when the onlooker saw his countenance fall, his tobacco-pouch drop from his hand, and the whole aspect of the man alter as suddenly and for the worse as though he had been shot in the stomach. Following the direction of his staring eyes, Robert beheld an announcement on the dead-wall opposite, which in his turn made him shudder from head to foot : *Murder—Two Hundred Pounds Reward—Frank Kavanagh*. These words were in large capitals ; and before he could make out the rest of what was printed in smaller type, Murphy had rushed across the street, plucked the Notice from the wall, and was tearing it to fragments. So fierce and vehement was the action, that Robert involuntarily compared it, in his own mind, with the rage and fury of some wild beast whose young is threatened ; and as he did so, he saw Murphy look quickly up at his window ; it would have been easy to have dropped the corner of the blind, but some fascination forbade him to do so, and in an instant their eyes had met. Such a tigerish look came into Murphy's face, and so suddenly, as though bent upon some instant violence, did he rush indoors, that the boy took up the only weapon that was at hand, the poker, convinced that within the next minute he would have to defend his life. This necessity, however, did not arrive. Murphy remained below, doubtless persuaded to do so by Mrs Mulvaney, whose voice, raised in passionate expostulation, could be distinctly heard. It was she, indeed, who had pointed out the Notice to Dick's attention, or, unacquainted as he was with the art of reading, he would have remained in blissful ignorance of its existence, or concluded it to be a mere embellishment of the wall ! And now it seemed she was impressing on him the futility, if not the wickedness, of endeavouring to make matters safe by proceeding to some fatal extremity. Robert discovered this by the simple method of opening his bedroom door and listening to the

conversation, which, under the circumstances, he might well be excused for doing.

'He knows too much,' urged Murphy, with a growl like that of a wild beast ('And how like some wild beast,' thought Robert, 'such as the hunting-tiger, trained, but not tamed by man, of which he had heard tell, this Murphy was!') 'he knows enough to hang us.'

'No, no,' rejoined the widow; then added something the listener could not catch, but which seemed to carry weight with it. 'Moreover,' she continued, in tones still hushed, but not inaudible, 'you are not in your own land, remember; and by adding a new crime to the other, you will only increase the danger to the young master. You are out of your mind, Dick—and it isn't far you have to go for that—or I would say, besides, that none but a villain would think of murdering a poor lad like that because of a groundless suspicion of his fidelity.'

'Murthering! Mrs Mulvaney; you're joking,' returned Murphy, in tones of apparent good-humour. 'I was only going to put the innocent young fellow out of the risk of temptation. Two hundred pounds reward is a considerable attraction, and especially to one who wants to marry and set up housekeeping.'

'You ought to be ashamed to say so,' answered the widow, evidently resisting some personal attentions of her variable swain: 'any one who is really in love with a young woman is the last person to entertain thoughts of treachery; though, if he is only pretending to be so—— Now, be aisy, and keep off, Mr Murphy.'

It was clear all danger to himself, for the present at least, was over; and Robert discreetly closed his door, and left the loving pair to conclude their love-passages without an eavesdropper. It was, indeed, with some little embarrassment that he presently descended into the sitting-room, to meet the man who, he had every reason to believe, had, but half an hour before, entertained the design of cutting his throat; but it was without fear. Boy as he was, he was far from being easily frightened. His nature was that of the typical Englishman, sound and wholesome; his intelligence was straightforward, without much imagination; and the outdoor life he had lived in the forest, both by night and day, had strengthened what had originally been far from sensitive nerves; moreover, he felt within himself a certain superiority over this wild, untutored savage that almost amounted to contempt. The other, however, had the advantage over him in one point. Whether from native cunning, or from some extraordinary shallowness of feeling, which permitted the most violent ebullitions of passion to pass away in a few minutes, and leave no trace, Mr Murphy seemed now entirely at his ease, and bade his young friend 'Good-morning!' in a tone that was almost genial. Mrs Mulvaney was as kind in her manner as ever, but was evidently depressed. Instead of being talkative as usual, she busied herself in preparing their breakfast, without a word; and sometimes, as though wrapt in thought, did not reply even when Murphy addressed her. In speaking of their proposed visit to Herne Street that morning, Dick observed: 'And unless you come with us—which, I suppose, can hardly be, mistress—you will scarce see the young master yourself, before he sails.'

'I suppose not,' answered the widow coldly.

'Not but that he would come here himself, if it were safe, and bid you good-bye in person, you may be sure,' said Dick soothingly.

It was evident that he had mistaken the cause of her indifference, for she added sharply: 'I don't wish to see him, Mr Murphy, either here or elsewhere; but least of all in my own house.'

'And you say that, who were born within the shadow of the ould master's roof-tree, and have had bread from his hand!'

'Yes,' cried the widow firmly, 'I do say it. I wash my hands of him; and I wish he could wash his of!—

'Silence, woman!' ejaculated Murphy, with a savage exclamation. 'Stop that glib tongue of yours; unless, indeed,' added he bitterly, 'you wish to get the blood-money. Perhaps it is *that* which has made such a change in Bridget Mulvaney. English air by itself could never have done it.'

The widow's eyes flashed fire: it evidently cost her a great effort to stifle her feelings, and forbear from some cutting reply, but she succeeded. 'I am not going to argue with you, Richard Murphy, or rather with the devil that is in you. I only warn you, for your own sake and for another's, not to be so free of speech to your foes as you have been this day to one who was onst your friend.' With that she rose from her chair, not without some dignity, and keeping a calm, contemptuous face opposed to his scowling looks, walked slowly out of the room. At this, Mr Murphy's features became suddenly choppfallen, and he fell to scratching his head.

'A woman is a curious creature, lad, as you will find out for yourself some day,' observed he to his remaining companion. 'Now, one would almost think, if one did not know her, that Mrs Mulvaney yonder was downright vexed.'

Not having the advantage of a long acquaintance with the lady in question, Robert confessed that that impression had been produced upon his own mind.

'But she wasn't, though; or if she was, it's over by this time,' explained the other. 'I own it was wrong in me to use such hard words, but a squeeze of her hand, or at most a chuck under the chin, will make her all right.'

Notwithstanding this confident speech, however, Mr Murphy did not attempt either of these experiments, nor, indeed, had he the opportunity of doing so, for when, after some hesitation, he ventured very gently to ring the bell, it was answered, not, as usual, by the widow, but by the maid-of-all-work, who quietly proceeded to remove the breakfast things.

'Missis' compliments,' said she, 'and if you should plaze to want anything, it is *me* as is to get it for you.'

At this, Mr Murphy looked rather thoughtful for a minute or two, and then, with the air of a man who has made up his mind on an important subject, chucked her under the chin, and bade her fetch the whisky-bottle. 'When love is denied to us, lad,' observed he with pathos, 'there is nothing for it but to take to what is better—liquor.'

He took to it till about noon, and then informed his companion that the time had come to keep their appointment with the young master. Robert professed his readiness to accompany him; but when Murphy took his arm and would have passed it through his own, the lad drew back.

'I am no man's prisoner,' said he haughtily, 'and I either walk in freedom, or not at all.'

Murphy gave him one of his ugly looks, but perhaps reflecting that there was no time to spare just then for having a quarrel out (a pleasure which can always be postponed), he permitted him to have his way as far as the nearest cab-stand, when he called a vehicle, and ordered the man to drive to Herne Street.

CHAPTER VI.—MR WILSON.

Herne Street is one of those short streets which run from the Strand to the river, and, like most of its fellows, has a disused and melancholy air. There is little or no traffic in it; there are no shops; it is composed wholly of lodging-houses, and a few mouldy looking hotels. At the river-end of the street, the card 'Apartments' no longer figures in the parlour-windows; but on each side of the doors, which usually stand open, are painted the names of the different tenants, the houses being let in flats. At one of these doors the cab stopped, and Murphy and his companion alighted. As they passed in without knocking, Robert's eye was at once attracted to the names, among which it naturally looked for that of Kavanagh; he was surprised to find it absent. They went up a stone staircase—very dirty, as common staircases are apt to be—and only stopped where the stairs stopped—at the third floor, and opposite a door with Mr Wilson painted on it. Murphy knocked, and a strange voice bade them come in.

Seated at a round table in a somewhat lofty room was a gray-haired old gentleman, pale, and with dark rings under his eyes, examining attentively a huge map spread out before him. So absorbed was he in this task, that he did but give a single glance towards his visitors, and then motioning with his hand towards a couple of chairs, resumed his occupation. Robert was not sorry for this, because it enabled him to at once indulge his curiosity, which was greatly excited by the contents of the apartment, in which everything was strange to him, with the trifling exception of the smell of spirits, with which the habits of his step-father—even before his stay at Mrs Mulvaney's—had made him tolerably familiar. Considering that it was at the top of the house, the room was a lofty one, and hung from floor to ceiling with pictures; some of these were on canvas, though only one or two were framed, but the majority were on paper, pinned to the wall. The furniture consisted partly of pictures also, which, in various degrees of completion, lay about the chairs and tables, and even on the floor; a curious machine, which he rightly concluded to be a painter's easel, though he had never before seen one, occupied a prominent place; and in two of the corners were life-size figures in armour, standing sentry-like over all this disarray. There was no carpet, nor even, to Robert's eyes—which were not exacting in that respect—much sign of comfort in the place at all; but the pictures and the armour attracted him mightily, as also did the stirring scene that presented itself outside the windows. These looked down immediately on the river, on which the noonday sun was shining, and on whose dusky, but sparkling bosom a score of steamers and other craft were making their way

with more or less of speed. He knew it for the Thames, else it would have been hard indeed to have identified the river, with whose grassy banks and gleaming shallows he was so well acquainted, with this bustling and crowded stream. His own circumstances seemed to offer a parallel to it; for was it not difficult to recognise in himself, now launched on the great tide of life, and already in such strange company, the boy of four-and-twenty hours ago, who had had no knowledge of the world beyond the simple life of the forest and what he had read in books. As he mused thus, Murphy called to him sharply: 'Don't you hear Mr Denton speak to you, or are you bent on making him say everything twice over, and him so weak and ill, you omadawn?'

Without bestowing a glance on Murphy, Robert respectfully apologised to the old gentleman for his inattention, and, in obedience to a sign from him, drew near his table.

'So you have quite made up your mind, I hear, young man,' said the stranger feebly, 'to leave this country, and take your chance with your new employer?'

'With Mr Kavanagh—yes, sir.'

'Be aisy, you fool,' growled Murphy, 'and leave gentlemen's names for themselves and their friends to use them.'

'Hush, hush!' said the old gentleman, turning round upon Dick severely, 'and don't *you* call people out of their names so freely. If I am not much mistaken in physiognomy, this lad is no more fool and omadawn than yourself—and that is Mr Frank's opinion.—The fact is, Robert Chesney, that just now Mr Kavanagh has reason to conceal his name, and it's better not to mention it. Indeed, he is at present concealing himself, and that is why I am appointed his substitute to speak with you this morning. You see this map—here is England, look you, and there, on the other side of the world, is Australia. It takes months to go thither, and months to return—if one ever does return!'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' interrupted Robert, 'but I have thought of all that, and if so be as Mr—'

'Let us say Mr Frank only, or perhaps Mr Wilson would be better still,' suggested the old gentleman with a smile.

'Very good, sir. Then, if Mr Wilson is still of the same mind towards me as before, I do assure you I shall not go back from *my* word. I am quite ready to go with him to Australia, or anywhere else, and make myself useful in the way that was agreed upon. But I should like to tell some one—I mean I should wish to write before I start to some one!—'

'Be quiet, Murphy,' cried Mr Denton, in answer to a growl of remonstrance from that gentleman: 'how can you make me raise my voice, when you know I am so unfit to do so. The lad thoroughly understands he is to mention no names, and that is sufficient.—Yes, you may write of course, and tell her—for it is a "her," I suppose, eh?—that if she writes by return of post, under cover to Mr Denton, Lloyd Brothers, shipping-agent, Liverpool, you will get her reply before you start. Mr Wilson has instructed me to supply you with an outfit for the voyage, which will be accomplished in an emigrant vessel, and I am to tell you not to be astonished if he himself should not be on board of her. Murphy will be there, and myself, but—'

'What! is not Mr Frank to go with us?' interrupted Robert. 'Nay, sir, then that alters all; for I took service with *him*, and with no one else. There is no love lost between this man—here he pointed over his shoulder to Murphy—'and myself; and though I am sure you are most kind and fair-spoken, I feel no call to go with you to the end of the earth, as I do with Mr Kavanagh.'

'That is well and boldly said, Robert,' said Mr Denton, smiling, 'though it is not complimentary to me and Murphy. If you had been a little less hasty to express your sentiments, I should have added, that though Mr Frank would not be on board the ship at starting, he would join it before it got to sea.'

'That is quite another matter, sir,' answered Robert simply; 'and if it be so, I am at your service.'

'Very good; then that is settled. I have just a few words to speak to Murphy; and meanwhile here is the newspaper.'

An exclamation in Irish here broke from Murphy's lips, but in unmistakable tones of alarm and horror.

'That man is afraid of my reading something in the paper about Mr Frank,' observed Robert contemptuously, his cheeks glowing scarlet with indignation. 'He accused Mrs Mulvaney this morning of wanting to sell his master to the police for the two hundred pounds reward that is offered, so that I suppose I ought not to feel aggrieved that he suspects me of the like baseness; but you may tell Mr Frank that his secret is as safe with me as with yonder scowling Irishman. I did not approve of that deed which has brought his master into trouble; but I think there was some excuse for it, and, at all events, sooner than any harm should come to him through my means, I would cut my right hand off.—Put the newspaper in your pocket, sir, for if you were to offer it to me now, I would not read it, nor shall I do so if the opportunity should occur again to-morrow. I have my own opinion, as I have said, about the mishance to the patrol, which, after all, was more Murphy's doing than his master's; but I don't want to hear the worst made out of it, and of Mr Frank, as is clear is done by their calling it *Wilful Murder*!'

'This lad must have Irish blood in his veins,' cried the old gentleman, regarding him with admiration. 'I can scarcely believe that one professing such meritorious sentiments can likewise turn his hand to what is useful, and keep accounts. See, here is a long list of poor fellows who are going out with us to the antipodes, and who do not get their passage for nothing, and also a rough estimate of what their kits will come to. Sit down yonder, and add me up the total.—And in the meantime, Dick—for all this talking has knocked me up—do you get out the whisky, and let us drink success to the *Star of Erin* and her voyage. In three days' time'— Here there was a knock at the door. Murphy ran to it, and turned the key, then looked at Mr Denton significantly.

'It's Polly's knock,' whispered the latter, rising excitedly; 'I had wished to have been spared this.'

'No matter; it will be a good test,' returned the other encouragingly, in the same low tone. 'Let her see you, if it be but for a minute or two, and then pass into the bedroom, and so out.'

Here the knocking was repeated, and a female voice exclaimed through the keyhole plaintively:

'Let me in, Frank. I know you are there, for I hear your voice.'

'You are mistaken there, Miss Mary,' observed Murphy, unlocking the door, and admitting the would-be visitor. 'Mr Wilson is out, and when he will return is very uncertain.'

The new arrival was a young woman of considerable beauty, small but exquisitely shaped, and whose keen blue eyes and lavish wealth of rich brown hair seemed to recall to Robert some familiar face. If that were so, the recognition did not appear to be mutual. 'Who is *he*?' inquired the young woman, pointing without a trace of shyness at Chesney; then carrying her finger on towards Mr Denton, 'and *he*?'

'They are two of my master's friends, whom I had no particular orders to introduce to you, Miss Mary,' answered Murphy.

'They are here by appointment, then, and waiting for him. Well, I shall wait for him too.'

With that she unfastened the seal-skin cloak she wore, and sitting down with her back turned towards Murphy, put up her pretty feet upon the fender.

'You may stop, or go away, Miss Mary, just as you please—'

'Thank you,' interrupted she with sharp contempt; 'I shall take advantage of your gracious permission, and stop.'

'Well, that can only end in disappointment, miss. Mr Frank is away, miles away, and, as you have been already informed by his own hand, is not coming back again to-day, nor any day; so there.'

'Is this true, gentlemen?' cried the girl, rising suddenly from her chair, and looking from one to the other appealingly. 'I have no means of knowing whether this man is telling me truth or not, Heaven help me!'

As Mr Denton did not even look towards her, but appeared more busily engaged with his map than ever, Robert thought himself called upon to reply. No man, with a heart in his bosom, looking on that pathetic, pleading face, could have refused to do so, and far less kind-hearted Robert Chesney, who, moreover, at once bethought him of one in the far-off forest glades, who might one day be praying for some longed-for news of him—in vain.

'Indeed, miss,' said he tenderly, 'I believe the man is telling you the truth. At least I came myself to-day to see Mr—Mr Wilson—and have failed in doing so. They told me he would not be here.'

'And is it true—you are young and kind, and have an honest face; you would not tell me a falsehood, I feel—that Frank—that Mr Wilson is going far away—abroad?'

'Indeed, miss, it is true.'

At these words the little creature seemed to shrink within herself, and dropping into her seat again, covered her eyes with her hands, to hide the tears that she could no longer restrain. Here Murphy touched Mr Denton on the shoulder, and that gentleman rose at once, and passing softly but quickly across the floor, opened the bedroom door and closed it behind him. The next moment the outer door of the bedchamber was heard to open and a rapid step to descend the stairs.

'That's him—that is Frank's footstep!' exclaimed the girl, starting to her feet, and rushing to the door.

'It is not. It is only Mr Denton,' observed Murphy coldly. She ran out, however, to satisfy herself of the fact by leaning over the banisters, and presently came back again, looking very tearful and excited.

'What have you done with him? Where is he?' asked she of Murphy. 'If you will not tell me where he is, at least tell me *how* he is?'

'Oh, he's well enough, so far as that goes,' answered Dick carelessly.

'He was not well, when I saw him last, not looking like himself at all. He had some trouble on his mind—was going down upon some unpleasant business, he said, into the country; and that made him take to what is so bad for him, more than ever.'

'Rubbish!' returned Murphy contemptuously. 'If you mean whisky, no Irishman was ever hurt by whisky yet. If you mean weakness of another sort—a foolish passion for your pretty face, that's over.'

'You liar!' cried the girl, her moist eyes darting fire, her cheeks aflame; 'you wicked, cruel liar!' Murphy laughed contemptuously. 'You pretend to love him, *you!*' she went on, with bitterness. 'It is you who are his worst enemy. You lead him on to drink. You flatter and encourage him whenever he is bent on what is wrong and dangerous. *You—you will be his ruin!*'

'Be quiet, vixen!' shouted Murphy. 'Keep a civil tongue in your head.—You won't? Then just you walk out of this room, and take my word for it, that it is the last time you ever see the inside of it.'

'I will not stir!' cried she defiantly. Robert knew her now; her face—generally resolute and scornful, as at present, but sometimes soft and pleading—was on half the pictures on the wall.

'Then I will put you out,' said Murphy sternly. He advanced towards her, holding out his huge hand menacingly. The expression of his face was so grim and fierce that she quailed before it.

'O Frank, O Frank!' exclaimed she with a passionate cry, 'why, why are you not here to strike him dead?'

The huge hand was almost on her wrist, and she, like some graceful animal fascinated by beast or reptile, standing motionless, save for the trembling of her limbs, before him, when Robert suddenly bounded between them, and whirling her light form towards one of the mailed sentinels of the apartment, snatched out his sword from its rusty scabbard, and brandished it in Murphy's face. 'I am not Mr Frank, miss,' cried he assuredly; 'but I will strike him dead, if he lays a finger on you; and let me tell him that if his master is the man I take him for, he will have an account to settle with him, for threatening a young lady under his own roof—like you.'

'A young lady!' echoed Murphy contemptuously; the allusion to his master doubtless checking the impulse he had at first entertained to rush in upon the lad, at all risks, and take summary vengeance on him for his interference. 'A pretty sort of a young lady, truly, though scarcely worth your fighting for, if you knew all. And if it comes to telling, suppose I were to tell the master, that the last time I saw Miss Mary she was cuddled up in your arms, like *that*. Come, there is no need for tale-bearing, nor for quarrelling neither.' It was evident that Mr Murphy very much repented

of what he had done, or had threatened to do, and that he feared the consequences of it. His tones, though gruff, were conciliatory; and his manner, like that of a bear asking for buns on the top of a pole, was embarrassed, but propitiatory.

'I am not more given to tale-bearing than yourself,' said Robert, who had dropped his fair burden, not without a modest blush, at the other's innuendo; 'nor do I seek a quarrel. But I won't stand by and see a woman ill-treated by any man; and she shall stay here as long as she likes, unless Mr Frank gives orders to the contrary.'

'She may stay, and *you* may stay, for all I care,' replied Murphy carelessly; 'but I have business elsewhere.' With that, he left the room, and passed down-stairs as far as the front-door, but did not cross the threshold. His business was twofold—to see that Chesney did not leave the house without him, and that his master did not enter it while Miss Mary remained within.

In the meantime, Robert began to feel a little awkward. When a knight-errant of the good old times had preserved an innocent damsel from a giant, he made no more ado about putting her behind him on his horse's crupper, as his own lawful prize, than if she were a sack of corn. But this chivalrous lad had no horse; and his affections, as we are aware, were already bespoken by another young person.

'I am very, very much obliged to you,' said Miss Mary, forcing a smile, and holding out a pretty little hand. 'I hope I may not be the cause of making that hateful man your enemy.'

'Don't you trouble yourself about me,' returned he good-naturedly; 'the only thing that gives me sorrow is to see you so cast down and sad. As for that fellow Murphy, he was no friend of mine before.'

'And yet you dared to anger him,' said she gratefully, 'to save me from insult—*me*, whom he would have you believe was a worthless, wicked girl! But though I am no young lady, as you called me, I am not *that*, indeed, sir.'

Robert knew he was getting very red indeed. He was burning to express his conviction that Miss Mary was everything that she ought to be, but he couldn't get out a word.

'The fact is,' continued his companion frankly, 'I'm a model.'

'Indeed!' said Robert simply, endeavouring not to appear surprised at this announcement, which, nevertheless, was a little unexpected. He had heard of a model of propriety, but he had never before seen one, and the reality fell short of his ideal.

'O yes; I'm *there*, and *there*, and *there*,' she said, pointing to various pictures, in which her lively features had been reproduced with more or less of success. 'There was a time when Mr Frank was never tired of painting me; but all that's over now, it seems.'

She sighed so pitifully, that Robert would have given all he had to have been able to say a word of comfort; but he had none to give. Simple as he was, he guessed that the relation between his master and this fair young creature had been a tender one, and was now broken off for ever. 'Is Mr Frank a painter, then?' inquired he.

'Yes; an amateur one, at least. What! did you not know that? You cannot, then, have known him long.'

'I met him for the first time,' he was about to say, 'the night before last,' but he stopped himself; that might be saying too much, perhaps. This girl could scarcely be in Mr Kavanagh's confidence, when she did not even know him by his real name, but called him Wilson. 'I met him for the first time quite lately.'

'And yet you must be intimate with him, to be admitted *here*,' said she.

'I have been taken into his service, miss, and am going ab—'

'Going abroad with him, you were about to say,' said the girl quickly. 'His letter told me truth, then?' She was silent for a little; then sinking her voice to a tone of deep feeling, went on, as though unconscious of her companion's presence: 'Well, well! I have no right to hinder him; no claim, alas! to accompany him. He would have said "Good-bye" with his own lips, I know, if he could have trusted himself to do so.'

'He wished to spare you pain,' suggested Robert sympathetically.

'Ah, I see; he has wound himself into your heart already,' replied she sadly. 'Beware of him! Don't think I speak it in bitterness, and because he has deserted me; but take warning from one who knows him well, and loves him still, and whom it grieves to give it. Frank Wilson wears as kind a heart as yours; he has been kind to me—most kind—and treats me now as kindly as I deserve. But he is not himself at all times. Beware of him when his brow clouds, and his words flow free and fast; beware of him when the drink is in him, and Murphy is at his ear. He is mixed up with dangerous schemes; I know not what they are, but those who work them with him are low and villainous men, unlike himself—unlike, I trust, what you will ever be. I would go with him to-morrow to the end of the earth, if he would have me with him; but though I am blind upon my own account, I can see on yours. Again I say, beware of him.—Good-bye, boy; and a thousand thanks.' She held her hand out for the second time, which he took and pressed. Then giving one last look around the familiar walls, as though to bid them farewell, she sorrowfully and silently quitted the apartment.

VEGETABLE INVADERS.

THERE are various elements of which the vegetable kingdom in any country is composed: first, the wild plants which grow spontaneously on the soil, and, as it were, a foundation; then come those which men have introduced in order to bring them under a higher degree of culture; and a third class, small in comparison with the other two, composed of species which various accidental circumstances have naturalised in a country. There is nothing fixed about any of these; time modifies them all; culture gradually produces the extinction of wild plants; whilst the progress of science, new interests, and intercourse with other lands, transform the rural economy. Where the plough leaves the ground untouched, spontaneous vegetation changes little; we know from the catalogues left us by old authors of centuries back, that the same wild flowers are there, now as then.

But has this never varied? Formerly, it was believed to be so, without even a discussion being raised; geology was a closed book, buried under

our feet; the suspicion of its existence was not started. Now the book is opened, and sufficient has been deciphered to shew that there have been a long series of transformations, commencing in the earliest ages of the world, and which will probably continue so long as our planet is warmed by the sun's rays, the only source of life on the surface of the globe. Happily, the strata of this earth have preserved the impress of vegetation, and by consulting these herbariums, we can restore in imagination the flora of past time. They are, however, closely allied; the number of plants now living which are found in a fossil state, increases daily; and all belong to the most recent deposits of our planet. It must not be supposed that these have no analogy with the more ancient ones of the carboniferous strata; our ferns and lycopodiums recall in some degree the trees from which coal has been formed, but it cannot be affirmed that a single plant of that age has been perpetuated among us; the species themselves have disappeared.

The tufa or travertin counts among the later geological formations; they are deposits of chalk formed by streams, the waters of which are charged with calcareous salts and carbonate of lime. Some of these are increasing in the present day, such as the tufa of the cascades of Terni, Tivoli, and of Kerka, a river of Dalmatia, which falls into the Adriatic. The leaves and fruits which have fallen into these incrusting waters are covered with successive layers of lime, which are moulded into the exact shape, with their most delicate veins and indentation. Generally, the leaf has disappeared, whilst the model remains, preserved in the mass of tufa, and giving a certain testimony that the trees with which these streams were formerly shaded are the same as now form our forests. There are elder trees, nut trees, oaks, elms, poplars, willows, laurels, vines, and the Judas tree; but some have disappeared from the region where they then grew, and have either migrated to the north or south. Three kinds of pines formerly existing on the Mediterranean shore are no longer there; one has taken refuge in the Alps, the second in the Cevennes, the third in the higher regions of the Pyrenees. Sometimes the living specimen of the mould in the tufa must be sought for far to the south; thus, a fern which once grew at Ain is now only seen in the Canaries, in Spain, and in Italy. The oleander, the pomegranate, and the Judas tree are no longer denizens of Lyon, as they once were; but these researches shew that the fig, the vine, and the walnut are trees indigenous to France, and not imported from other countries. There is but one kind of palm tree now growing in Europe; it may be met with in Spain, Italy, Corsica, Greece, and Sardinia. One existed at Nice at the beginning of this century, but was destroyed by the intemperate zeal of botanical collectors. Asia and America are the true countries of this beautiful form, yet the remains of several other kinds have been found, which have not survived the vicissitudes of climate.

In Switzerland, where M. Heer, one of the first botanists of the present time, has been carrying on his researches, the strata at the southern extremity of the Lake of Zürich shew numerous imprints of fruit and leaves; among which may be recognised many of our forest trees, and those aquatic plants which are still to be found in the marshes of the country. Thus, we gather that after the retreat

of the great glaciers which covered Switzerland, Germany, France, and Italy, the forests were very similar to those of the present day, in a climate probably a little colder than our own; whilst that of northern regions was decidedly warmer. At this epoch, Iceland, Greenland, and Spitzbergen were covered with vast forests of cypress and pines; whilst in the Miocene period, the vegetation of Central Europe was that of tropical countries, and analogous to what now obtains in Carolina, Florida, and Georgia—the larger growths of Provence and Languedoc assimilating to those of the Canary Islands.

On the sides of the steepest rocks in the Pyrenees, the traveller sees with surprise a large tuft of leaves with a pretty bunch of blue flowers in the centre. The roots of this plant (*Ramondia Pyrenaica*) penetrate into the smallest fissures of the stone, and grow vigorously without any other nourishment than the water they absorb and the air they breathe. It is curious to find that, limited as it is to these mountains, and to those of Mont Serrat in Catalonia, it is the only representative in Western Europe of the exotic family of *Cyrtandracea*. The two kinds nearest to it grow in the mountains of Roumelia and in those of Japan; all the other species are spread over Nepaul and the Indian Archipelago. It is evidently a stranger in the midst of its surrounding vegetation. In the same mountains, botanists discovered a few years ago, at a height of from six to eight thousand feet, a low-growing plant with a very strong stem, which turned out to be of the family *Dioscorea*, to which belongs the *Ignava* of China and other kinds which are spread over tropical Asia and America. This is the only European representative; and it is no less surprising that it should have been discovered on the edge of the eternal snow, than if a monkey, a parrot, or a humming-bird had been met with there. These exotic plants lead back the thoughts to the flora which preceded ours, when the height and connection of the continents were very different to what they are in the present day.

Naturalists have studied with particular care the flora of islands, where, in a circumscribed space, nature offers a small and limited vegetable kingdom. Rousseau, when living in a little island in the Lake of Bienne, projected the idea of a 'Flora petrinsularis,' a study full of teaching and of surprises, raising problems which are still far from being resolved. Thus, in the British Isles, there is not a single species belonging exclusively to them; all, excepting two, are found on the European continent; so it is naturally concluded that they have been subject to a great vegetable invasion like Denmark and Normandy. But there are other islands, on the contrary, such as Madagascar, the Canaries, and the Galapagos, which have a flora entirely different from the nearest continent. Edward Forbes was the first to point out that England and Scotland had been colonised by arctic plants during the glaciary period; when the climate softened, these took up their abode in the mountains; then came the epoch when England was united to the continent. The same submarine forests are found on the coasts of England and France, and the former was but a promontory of the latter, like Finisterre. The plants of Picardy propagated themselves in Devonshire and Cornwall, and in the counties of Cork

and Waterford in Ireland, and, at the present day, similar ones are growing in the peninsula of which Cherbourg forms the extremity.

This vegetable migration has not been able to pass over our southern coasts; the coolness of the climate placed an impassable barrier to its farther advance. These species have been classified under the Armorican type. Another still more numerous tribe invaded our shores from the north of France and Germany, and have occupied the greater part of England, Scotland, and Ireland, though, as regards the last country, many never crossed St George's Channel. If all these classes could be divided among the boreal, the Germanic, and the Armorican, there would be little difficulty to the botanist; but in the south of Ireland we find the arbutus, six kinds of saxifrage, and three heaths, all strangers, and common to the Pyrenees and Asturias, affording a proof of the ancient geological connection between that country and the Gulf of Gascony. One of these plants is found in the Azores, and we begin to see the first lineaments of that continent mentioned by Plato, and long treated as fabulous, rising out of the ocean, which geology, in agreement with botanical geography, tends to reconstitute. There are two other plants, the eriocalon and spiranthes, which are also found in America. The first, growing in the peat-mashes of the island of Skye, and in the Irish lakes near the sea, is the only European representative of the exotic family of *Restiaceae*, which is spread over Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, and Brazil. The other is an orchid of Newfoundland and the Northern States. The introduction of these plants by ships cannot be entertained, because they both belong to fresh water, and could not have been brought by currents or in the ballast of ships.

If we turn to other archipelagoes, we find four groups on the coast of Africa. The traveller landing at Madeira is struck with the European character of the vegetation, resembling that of the south and the shores of the Mediterranean; but if we penetrate to Porto Santo and the rocks of Desertas, in the mountains and ravines, there are African, Asiatic, and American plants which Hooker classifies as the Atlantic species. The presence of these is extraordinary, and exactly as if we met with varieties in Jersey unknown on the coasts of France and England. It must be understood, however, that man has greatly changed the primitive flora of Madeira. When the Portuguese discovered it in 1419, the island was covered with forests; the new colonists set them on fire, and they burned for seven years. The vine and the sugar-cane flourished admirably on this soil covered with ashes, but how many plants must have perished during this long conflagration! At Porto Santo, a rabbit and its young were put on shore in 1418; and their descendants multiplied so rapidly, that the colonists themselves were afraid of death by starvation, as they browsed upon everything they could reach.

The Canary Islands, which are much nearer to Africa, have a flora which has scarcely anything in common with that country. Out of a thousand species, many are not found in any other part of the world, and others belong to the Mediterranean. Passing on to the Azores, we find the common heath and the *Dabæcia polyfolia* of Ireland and Western France and Spain. The *Campanula Vidali* only exists on the steep rocks of the Isle of Flores,

the seed of which has been sent to England: it has grown and multiplied, and is now in greater abundance here than in its native land. nearer to America, the Azores ought to have more of its vegetation than Madeira and the Canaries; yet the contrary is the case, and many plants common to the latter are wholly unknown in the former. In the Cape de Verd Islands, which have been explored by Hooker and Lowe, the flora seems to be a prolongation of that of the African Sahara: In the mountains, there are a few species of the European type, but not a single one belonging to the three other archipelagoes, the dragon-tree only excepted.

The island of St Helena, lost in the immensity of the Atlantic Ocean, is of volcanic origin. When first discovered, it was covered with forests, which descended down the ravines to the very borders of the sea; now all is bare, destroyed, not by fire, but by the teeth of the wild goat. Introduced in 1513, they multiplied to such a degree, that seventy years after, Captain Cavendish saw them in flocks above a mile long. In 1709, a few forests still existed, and one of the trees which grew in them, the ebony, was cut down to feed the lime-kilns. The governor wrote to the directors of the East India Company for permission to destroy the goats and preserve the forests; to which they replied, that the goats were worth more than the ebony. A century after, in consequence of other remonstrances, the goats were banished, and the indigenous vegetation reappeared, when a new disaster arrived. General Beatson introduced a number of plants foreign to the island: the briars, brooms, willows, and poplars of England; heaths from the Cape; trees from Australia; and weeds from America. They all grew and multiplied prodigiously. Happily, Dr Burchell had previously formed his herbarium, which is at Kew, and from which Dr Hooker has constituted a primitive flora, consisting of forty species, which are found in no other part of the world. Among them is the singular wood which the colonists denominate gumwood-tree, and nearly allied to our European conyza.

Passing over the equator to another hemisphere, is the isle of Kerguelen, perpetually beaten by an angry sea, and surrounded by icebergs, sterile as one of the arctic regions. It is a black volcanic mass, surrounded by shoals, which led Captain Cook to call it the Island of Desolation. At a distance, it seems denuded of all vegetation; but on approaching, there are seen round tufts of an umbelliferous plant, and a few grasses, which border the shore in sheltered bays. Anderson, the naturalist of Captain Cook's expedition, found only eighteen species; but still later, Hooker has increased them to a hundred and fifty. One of them, a gigantic crucifer, resembling a cabbage, was called by the English sailors the Kerguelen cabbage: for a hundred and thirty days this formed the only food of a crew of a hundred and twenty men, among whom the first symptoms of scurvy had appeared. Dr Hooker, out of gratitude, called it after Sir John Pringle, who was known by his researches into this disease; but the *Pringlea* has no affinity with other species in the southern hemisphere. Another plant, of the genus *Lyellia*, is also indigenous to Kerguelen, and recalls the type of Alpine plants in the chain of the Andes.

Next, we reach the large archipelago of the South Sea, including New Zealand. About a thousand phanerogams are to be found there. When analysing them, the botanist cannot fail to be surprised again at this anomaly, that the greater number of kinds in New Zealand are not to be found in the nearest continent, that of Australia; and that the others also exist in South America, which is separated from it by a third part of the globe's circumference. In Australia, the forests are all but exclusively composed of the acacia and eucalyptus, so common in the gardens about Nice; but none of these trees are indigenous to the forests of New Zealand. Yet the climate is not unfavourable to their growth, as evidenced by their rapid increase in these cases where they have been introduced.

The plants which belong to European classes are almost all aquatic, but nothing in the organisation of the seeds can explain their transport from one hemisphere to the other. Those species which may be classed as American include one tree, the *Edwardsia grandiflora*, and many kinds of fuchsia and calceolaria, well known to the lovers of horticulture; yet they do not grow in Australia or any other part of the globe excepting the temperate zones of South America. These peculiarities are reproduced on the smaller islands: that which bears the name of Lord Howe contains five species of the palm-tree peculiar to itself, and apparently belonging to the genus *Seaforthia*. The other plants may be found in Norfolk Island, to which we owe the pine of that name, but the vegetable characteristics of Australia are wholly absent.

Many problems arise in the mind of the observer when these facts are considered. It must not be forgotten that our present flora is the result of transformations carried on during thousands of years, leaving behind them obscure and isolated traces. The plants which lived in the tertiary or quaternary periods—such as the laurel, the pomegranate, the fig-tree—represent a primitive population which has survived all revolution, and not succumbed in the unequal struggle of great invasions of vegetation from near or distant continents. It is the same with plants as with races—the weaker and fewer in number fall before the more vigorous and fruitful. The plants of Europe seem to share the qualities of the men: they now dominate in the Canaries, Azores, and Madeira; they are invading many regions of America, and play the same part in New Zealand.

How, then, have these immigrations taken place, and do they testify to a former union of islands with the nearest continents? As far as England is concerned, this fact seems to be incontrovertible; but it must be doubtful as regards other islands, such as Madagascar, Galapagos, and the Falkland Islands, the flora of which is so different from the neighbouring continent. Naturalists who refuse to accept this explanation believe in the transport of seeds by migratory birds. So trifling a cause might in a series of ages produce considerable results; and the vegetation of the Faroe Islands naturally explains itself in the millions of seabirds which summer in the north of Europe, and pass the winter in the south. The currents of sea-water must also not be overlooked: Linnaeus was well aware that the Gulf-stream brought seeds from the Gulf of Mexico to the coasts of Scotland and

Norway. A seed of the climbing mimosa has been picked up among the pebbles of the North Cape, while many others, after being in the water for a time, lose their powers of germination. In support of this theory, the reefs of coral have been adduced, which, rising out of the Pacific Ocean, are in time covered with palm-trees, herbaceous plants, and animals imported from neighbouring islands ; but for many this is not conclusive, and they adhere to the opinion of the ancient union between Europe and America. Life is too short, and the organisation of scientific proofs for a long period has not been tried, whilst analogy and induction permit us to say : 'Nothing in nature is immutable.'

SAVED BY HUMMING-BIRDS.

IN FOUR PARTS.—PART III.

WHEN I drew near to El Viejo, riding post-haste from the seaport, in pursuance of my promise given to my partner, Mr Blurt, no sounds of labour reached my ears, and I neither heard the dull hum of the machinery, nor the familiar clink of the shovel and pickaxe. Never before had the old silver mine, which resembled nothing so much as a bare and ghastly gash in the bleak mountainside, looked more forlorn or forbidding. The hot, bright sun shone on the serrated peaks of the heights above, where I could see vultures sitting—a grisly company—pruning their foul feathers, or slowly digesting the meal of flesh with which they had gorged themselves at some *saladero* where cattle were being slaughtered by wholesale. The clefts in the rock, the sullen glens, and the dry beds of the winter torrents, looked almost of inky blackness as contrasted with the cliff-tops, where, in the vivid light, every splintered crag and thorny bush were sharply defined. Blurt came to meet me as I rode, followed by Tlatzo and by a guacho who acted as groom and courier, into the little agglomeration of rude huts, sheds, and storehouses that we called the village of El Viejo.

'There is a strike, or something of the sort,' he said despondently, 'among the miners. The greasers are the worst ; but though the Indians are quiet enough, they are as obstinate as an over-loaded mule. Some nonsense they have got in their heads about the great north gallery has made them turn restive.'

And so it proved. The proposal to drive the gallery in question deeper into the mountain had been encountered by a stubborn if passive resistance on the part of at least three-fourths of our available working-force ; while the few Spanish half-breeds who would condescend to labour for wages were not merely obstinate, but mutinous, fingering their knives after an ugly fashion, when urged by the overseers to complete their contract, and draping themselves in their tattered mantles with that air of theatrical dignity which only Spaniards can assume. For them, however, I cared little. The English-speaking miners outnumbered them, and were by far more than a match, man for man, for all the swarthy

Josés and Basilios in our employment. But the tacit revolt of the pure-blooded Indians was a very much more serious affair. The power of obstinate endurance which the South American peon possesses is very great, and a true account of the means by which their Spanish oppressors enforced their ceaseless treadmill of toil would be but a grim chapter of history. It was plain, however, that if the natives would not work, we must be ruined. Our men from the United States could not, unsupported, carry on the multiform labour of the mine. 'We must send for the cura,' said I, in despair of suggesting anything better ; and Blurt shrugged his shoulders in token of reluctant assent.

The cura, like many parish priests in South America, was by no means a bad man, though very far from attaining to a high ecclesiastical standard of excellence. A little old man of seventy, with silver hair fringing his black silk skull-cap, he had no very notable fault beyond that of avarice. He was excessively polite to us, for were we not Dons and men of property, as well as heretics and foreigners ! But he sold us his assistance, with his flock, the simple Indians, very dear indeed ; and we were often angry when compelled to pay an exorbitant fee before our well-intentioned *mozos* could be persuaded, on infallible authority, that to work on a red-letter day did not entail eternal pains and penalties. Still, this being a national institution, we had grumbled and submitted ; and now we sent for Don Ignatio, in the hope that his bland tongue would soon win over our recalcitrant miners.

On this occasion, we were doomed to disappointment, for the old priest unwillingly avowed that he could do nothing. 'Had it been a question of feast or vigil, noble Englishmen,' he said, rubbing his soft old hands together, 'of saint's celebration or of fast of the church, without doubt my faithful flock would have hearkened to my voice ; but this repugnance of theirs lies deeper—alas ! that I should say so ! This is some blind belief of the wicked heathen days, before the light of the true faith began to dawn on the benighted country. A prophet of *los barbaros*—of the vile necromancers before the Conquest—denounced evil on those who should drive the north gallery farther into the rocky heart of the mountain ; and the men, in short, won't work, and their wives won't let them, for fear of they know not what.'

'And yet,' said Blurt to me, as, arm in arm, we walked to and fro in the outer workings of the mine—'and yet we must drive this gallery home, or be bankrupt. The idiots who have worked this mine hitherto have never noticed the trend of the great silver veins, or how the strata lie, but have kept following up small threads and disconnected lodes—wasting work and time, for pure lack of geological knowledge. See these maps, these calculations.' And with plans and charts, and all the weight of his theoretical lore and practical knowledge, he proved to me that the north gallery was the very keystone of the hidden treasures of the mine ; that bygone owners had nibbled, so

to speak, at corners and fragments of the great concealed silver store, but that the royal road to fortune lay along the passage from which some senseless superstition warned off our native labourers. He pointed out to me that all the expense he had incurred, all the arrangements he had perfected, were subservient to this long-cherished scheme of forcing on the piercing of the great north gallery—began, as he made me remark, on a scale of unusual magnitude by some of our predecessors in the dim past, and then interrupted, as if through sheer caprice. ‘The cura can’t help us,’ he said, savagely kicking the chips of quartz and serpentine out of his way as he strode to and fro, ‘and yet we cannot do without the brass-coloured cusses yonder. Could Tlatzo—could that Indian lad of yours—try his hand at the rowdies?’

Tlatzo did try, and with success. Something was due, perhaps, to the fact that we made a lavish distribution of beads, brass buttons, ribbons, and other articles of cheap European finery, among the women of the village; and that we spent five pounds on a feast of fritters and sweetcake, enlivened by sky-rockets and musket-firing, and washed down with chocolate and sherbet, since more potent beverages would vainly have been offered to that primitive race; but the Indian boy whom I had saved from being food for sharks was the real motive-power to which we owed the happy termination of our undertaking. I have before said that, as the descendant of a race of petty caciques, and as a member of a tribe but half subdued by the white man, Tlatzo had considerable influence; and when he set himself to work to controvert the prejudice which impeded the carrying out of my associate’s designs, his energy prevailed—and that the rather that he was deemed himself to be at least half a pagan—over the dead-weight of the local tradition. The end of all this was, that every Indian returned to his work, while about half the miners of Spanish stock remained obdurate, and received an ignominious dismissal. We could afford, however, to do without them.

And now indeed the task of driving onwards the great north gallery was pushed on with a hearty resolution that promised to make up for lost time. All day came clanging from the subterranean passages that honey-combed the mountain, the sonorous sound of the mighty blows of the pick, as our sturdy northern men applied their practised strength to the duty of rock-cleaving; while there was an incessant tinkle of spade and shovel as the busy Indians cleared away the broken scraps of stone, and a perpetual sallying forth of heavily laden basket-carriers, each plodding upwards with his load of rocky fragments. The new boring-machines roared and sputtered as they tore at the side of the mountain with their jagged steel teeth, while every now and then rang forth a hoarse, bellowing report, as a blast was fired, and fresh gaps were opened in the rocky rampart which we were breaching by every means known to science. Each step of our progress confirmed my partner’s predictions. The thick veins of silver, whence branched numberless threads, unquestionably ran off northwards, and, to all appearance, we had but to follow them up to secure Fortune’s choicest favours. By the sixth day, the yield of fine ore had increased from sixty-two ounces to one hundred and eighty-seven.

How well I remember the opening of that sultry

seventh day of our new work—a day of unusual heat—when the fitful mountain-breeze had entirely died away, and there was not a breath to stir the dusty, metallic-looking foliage of the few trees that could thrive in that arid soil. The sun looked dull and red, and those who knew the country best remarked that the wet season would not be slow in coming upon us now, and that most probably the rains had already begun among the loftier mountains to the south and west.

‘So much the better,’ said Blurt cheerily: ‘we shall have the tanks full, and not depend, as we do now, for every gallon of muddy stuff on what these poor Indian women fetch us from the canyon below, a sight I never liked to see.’

And in truth it was painful, day by day, to see the long procession of these poor creatures, each with a tall jar of baked clay on her head, slowly ascending the rugged path that led to the mine, though those who figured in it were blissfully unconscious of any degradation or hardship.

When the workmen reassembled, after the noon-day meal, it was perceptibly hotter, and we began to apprehend a storm. The sun was tinged with angry crimson, and the horizon, usually so clear in that transparent atmosphere, was dull, and stained with confused colours, like a painter’s palette. The air of the mine was cold in comparison with that without, which was hot, sickly, and unrefreshing, like that of an oven. Yet we pressed on the works, giving draughts of sangaree and drams of raw spirit to the American miners as, half-fainting, they came one by one to take a spell of rest in the adit of the pit, while the natives plied their toil unmurmuringly.

‘Wish, if there is to be a tornado, as the Dons call it, it would come a buster, and have done with it,’ said one tall Virginian, named Peters, who had been two years in the country, and who acted as foreman.

It did ‘come a buster’ towards four o’clock on that afternoon, since all the fury of the elements seemed to be let loose on us at once; and what with the incessant crash and rattle of the thunder, the vivid glare of the lightning, the howling of the wind, and the weighty, ceaselessplash of the tropical rainfall, there was a very Babel of sights and sounds, grandly picturesque, but bewildering. The wet season had set in, and with almost magical rapidity every rill was a stream, every ravine a river, every pebbly torrent-bed filled to the brim with rushing water, tawny as a lion’s mane, and washing down earth, and stones, and brushwood into the valleys below. This meteorological disturbance was at its height, when my partner, who had been underground with the working gang, came hastily towards me. His flushed, eager look told of strong excitement.

‘We are in luck this time, Farley,’ he said, as he tossed back the dark hair from his heated brow: ‘come along, man, and judge for yourself.’ And so saying, he almost dragged me to the mine, whence ascended an unusual babble of voices mingling with the clatter of the iron tools as they struck the flinty sides of the cavern. Tlatzo, who had just returned from hunting, and who had his bow in his hand, and some three or four red-legged partridges dangling from his shoulder-belt of jaguar skin, followed me in silence. ‘Look here!’ said Blurt triumphantly, as he pointed to a solid wall, obviously of human construction, which completely

barred our further progress along the north gallery, and which was but recently revealed by the removal of the earth and pebbles that had previously concealed it. 'Proof positive, this is, that we are on the right trail. The chape that closed this up so carefully, must have had something worth the hiding on the inner side of such a door.'

And indeed the appearance of the wall, built of massive blocks, chiefly of igneous rock, cemented together by a mortar that with time had become indurated to a remarkable extent, was such as to justify the evident importance which my astute associate attached to its discovery. It was of itself deserving of notice, so immense were the ponderous blocks, so accurately laid were the courses, almost rivalling the Cyclopean masonry of prehistoric Greece; and a professional architect might have marvelled at the patient skill of the semi-civilised builders, who had made such good use of the imperfect mechanism at their command, to produce a result, that, even with modern appliances, would have been a work of cost and time.

It was, however, no archaeological interest which had fired Blurt's blood, and had spread its contagion among the white miners—I mention the latter advisedly, for the Indians were huddled up together like a flock of alarmed sheep, muttering to one another as they regarded the new-found wall with a sort of stupid wonder. The American workmen were mainly of opinion that a considerable treasure, the product of mining operations in the days before the Conquest, and walled up to keep it from the Spanish intruders, might be looked for beyond the barrier of antique stone-work. And those who were the most moderate in their anticipations were assured that the richest veins of the mine, probably leading to some silver-bearing stratum of unusual value, which the lieutenant of the Inca had desired to keep secret from the approaching Spanish invaders, would be found behind the wall. Nerved to exertion by the dream of heaped-up masses of ore, of piled ingots, and bars and lumps of virgin silver, the men had assailed the rocky rampart with the force and fury of angry Titans; but the stubborn resistance which the great strength of the masonry opposed to them was an overmatch for their efforts.

'No good chopping at the tarnation thing,' growled out, in wrathful accents, a brawny giant from the north, exhibiting the bent and blunted point of his pickaxe. 'That old mortar is a caution to Philadelphia ironsmiths, and the slabs are worse than millstones. We must jest clap in the gun-cotton, mister, and let her rip!'

My partner was already busy with the necessary preparations for breaching the obstinate wall. Two leather bags, stuffed with Schönbein's innocent-looking cotton, white and soft as the curly wool of a newly washed lamb, were being connected with the electric fuses by which their fulminating contents were to be discharged without peril to the labourers around. Blurt's hand trembled as he adjusted, with perhaps less than his usual adroitness, the cartridges that contained the thin scrap of platinum wire, nestling among the black grains of coarse gunpowder.

'This is the true Golden Fleece,' he said to me in a low voice, but one that was husky and tremulous with suppressed emotion, and pointing to the soft white cotton: 'I'd not take five thousand dollars for my share of what lies beyond.'

The men, as I gathered from their broken remarks, were much of the same way of thinking; for, as they gradually fell back from the wall, I distinguished such low-voiced observations as these: 'Halves and quarters! No; but shares of some sort. This ain't regular wage-work, if I know anything of a mine.'

'Thirds, anyway, ought to come to the whole kit of us, eh, boys?'

'Let the boss alone. He and the Britisher air not the lads to play dog in the manger—never fear.'

Blurt slowly stepped back, laying down as he went the silk-incased wires that were to connect the ignition cartridges with the galvanic battery that stood at some distance, beside a spur of rock, with a lantern hanging above it, from one of the wooden props, that at intervals supported the broken and irregular roof of the excavation.

'Stand back—under cover with you, there,' he called out hoarsely: 'get out of harm's way, one and all, while I fire the shot.'

As the engineer spoke, Tlatzo, who had hitherto stood in apparent unconcern at my elbow, silent and still as a bronze statue, suddenly started, and seemed to listen, then, creeping towards the wall, he bent forward, as if to hearken to some faint sound, not audible to dullest ears.

'Come back, Redskin!' grumbled Peters; 'unless yew want to try whether your copper hide is stone proof. The splinters will fly pretty thick, as sure as my given name is Zerubbabel!'

I took the boy, seemingly unconscious of the danger, by the shoulder, and drew him back to where the miners were all gathered, behind such shelter as the nooks and sidings of the cavern afforded.

'There—there again!' breathlessly exclaimed the Indian lad, as he stooped to apply his ear to the ground. 'Don Juan, for the love of the blessed saints, stop—'

It was too late. A flash, and a roar, and a groan as from some wounded monster, smitten mortally by a sudden thrust, and the rattle of the splintered stones that flew around like so much grape-shot, and the crumbling and crashing of the torn-up masonry, and a wild huzza from the men; these were the immediate accompaniments of the blowing up of the breached rampart. But the cheery shout of the miners changed into a cry of horror and dismay, as another sound, deep, booming, continuous, succeeded to the echoing report of the blast.

'Indian boy know it—quick, master, quick!' cried Tlatzo, grasping my wrist, and hurrying me towards the upper part of the sloping cavern, just as, through the yawning gap in the wall, there leaped forth, black, angry, and terrible, a seething flood of raging water, that poured like a mill-race into the pit; sweeping along before it earth and blocks of stone, heavy timbers, and panniers full of splintered rock, like so much thistle-down before the might of the gale. The firing of that unlucky blast had given passage to a vast volume of water that had hitherto lain concealed in the depths of the mountain, swollen as it probably was by the recent rains, and that had now burst forth like some long-imprisoned demon when the spell of the wizard is broken.

There was a frantic rush towards the pit-mouth. Forty feet or more over our heads we could see the

higher level of one of the upper galleries, through which we had passed on our way from the outer air. But there was only one ladder, and so rapidly did the encroaching water deepen, that the utmost coolness and activity on the part of all concerned could scarcely have insured the means of escape to the whole number. As it was, the panic was complete, and, in a frenzy of selfish fear, the crowd rushed on, remorselessly trampling down the weakest, to drown and die in the flood that was fast following, and in a moment the ladder was black with struggling forms, thick as so many bees at swarming-time, and it quivered and bent beneath the undue weight.

'Have a care yonder!' I shouted; 'the ladder cannot!'—But they heeded not my warning, and before it was completed, the frail wood-work broke, and came crashing down into the pit with all its living load; and, as the fast rising flood reached the rearmost of the fugitives, there arose a yell of wild despair. I looked eagerly round for Blurt, but I could not see him. The mob of frightened miners rent the air with useless cries for aid, groans, and imprecations. Alas! the ladder, our only hope, lay in fragments. The steep rock-wall defied the boldest climber; while, by the yellow light of the many lanterns, we could see with what fearful rapidity the black subterranean tide was gaining upon us. I shall never forget the agony of those few dreadful minutes. I was not more timid than most Englishmen, and could doubtless have faced death in some shapes with tolerable firmness, but such a death—to perish like a rat in a hole, dying miserably, far from the light of day! What was Tlatzo about? In the anguish of the moment, I turned my eyes on him, and saw, with a kind of stupid surprise, that he was in the act of bending his bow!

A stranger spectacle has seldom been beheld than that which the flooded gallery now presented. The miners, Spanish, Indian, and American, mixed together in a jostling crowd, were struggling, one with another, to reach the base of the rock, and essay the desperate hazard of scrambling up its slippery front; but all such attempts were in vain; and I saw more than one wretch, who, by superhuman efforts, had raised himself a few feet from the ground, slip from his hold, dragged down by the reckless grasp of those who followed him in the mad race for safety, and fall bruised and bleeding beneath the trampling feet of his comrades. The black tide rose and rose, the flood pouring in like a torrent through the gap, and though I stood on an elevated spot, my feet were already immersed, while many of the miners were waist-deep in the turbid stream, afloat on which, and whirling to and fro, were two of the lanterns, the glare of which, as the eddies swept them here and there, was like that of corpse-lights dancing on the murky waters of a fen. And there, in the midst of all this confusion, stood Tlatzo, graceful as a bronze statue of Apollo, fitting the notch of an arrow to the string of his bow.

'Hist, master!' he whispered in my ear; 'quick, when Tlatzo throw the cord to the right—mind, to the right. To lose one moment is to lose all!'

And before I could divine his intention, he had drawn his arrow to the head, and launched it, and them another and another, as fast as he could draw them from the tiger-skin quiver at his back. Of six shafts, two glanced back, broken, from the

wall of rock; but four, directed with unerring aim, stuck fast in fissures between the stones; and, leaping upward with the activity of a young panther, the boy began to scale the precipice by the aid of this improvised ladder, springing from one foothold to another, and clinging to the smallest inequality of surface with a dexterity that might have done credit to a monkey. So quick were his movements, that it was not until he was some fifteen feet above the ground that the miners espied him, and with a roar of renewed hope, endeavoured to follow by that dangerous path; but it was impossible for any human being, less slender and agile, to emulate such an exploit; and even beneath Tlatzo's light weight, I heard arrow after arrow snap, as the lithe lad wriggled his way up the rock-face, driving his hunting-knife into every crack and crevice, to aid his upward course, until, by one desperate spring, he swung himself over the lip of the precipice, and stood in safety.

On the platform, some forty feet above us, there were ropes enough. The Indian boy seized one of these, and hurriedly secured it to a prop of solid timber, and then, to my great surprise, moved swiftly off towards the *left*, whither he was followed by all the clamorous crowd below, uttering a hoarse chorus of entreaty, reproach, and imprecation, as they fought with one another in the scramble to be first. By this time the surging water reached above my knees, while several of the miners could with difficulty keep their footing. When all the throng of maddened miners had been drawn aside, Tlatzo came back with flying feet toward the right of the platform, and cast me down the rope. I seized on it, and began the ascent as speedily as I could, setting my feet against the rock, and going up hand over hand; while, with a shout of disappointed eagerness, the despairing wretches near me hurried to compete for the chance of life.

'Quick, *por l'amor de Dios*, quick!' cried Tlatzo's warning voice, and I had made some progress, when I felt a powerful grasp tighten on my left ankle, and felt a heavy weight added to mine. Still I struggled on, straining every muscle and sinew; and I had, indeed, reason to be thankful that some of my spare hours had been devoted to gymnastics, and that to rely on my own wrists to support me was no novel experience. The real danger was in the tenacity with which my unknown friend below clung to me, and in the prospect that the rope might snap. Once or twice, spent and gasping for breath, I had well nigh relaxed my hold, but by renewed exertions I reached the edge, and, with Tlatzo's help, gained the safe summit of the platform.

Peters, the foreman—for he it was who had clutched me with a firmness that had nearly proved fatal to both—stood beside me on the rock, drawing a deep breath, as he passed his heavy hand over his livid brow.

'No offence, colonel,' he said simply; 'I only meant to go snacks, one way or another. Now, we'll bear a hand for these poor coons down below.'

But with all our exertions, and we worked hard, as the occasion demanded, throwing down rope after rope, and hauling up such of the sufferers as could keep their grasp of the saving cord, we could preserve but few, about half of whom were Indian miners. The rest, knit into a struggling and compact mass of frenzied human beings, impeded one

another in their efforts, and their very eagerness to escape proved fatal to them; the flood mounting, mounting ever, until at last the gurgling groans below ceased, and the sullen water rose, and still rose, to within a yard of the platform, and then slowly yeastèd in eddying swirls, from which we could now and then catch a momentary glimpse of the dead face of one of our hapless companions.

'Wall, mister,' said the gaunt Zerubbabel, as, wet, weary, and dejected, we desisted from our toil, 'this certainly air a back-handed lick, and kinder spiteful, Dame Fortune has given yew. Two hours ago, I'd sooner have changed places with yew, or Mr Blurt, than with even the President at Washington City, and now I guess the stakes are about swept, and that's a truth—no offence, as I said before.'

These words of the rough Virginian recalled me to a true sense of my position. It was not only that Death was present, for Ruin was there too. The mine of El Viejo was hopelessly flooded. Blurt was dead, and I, a bankrupt, might almost as well have slept beneath the black pool below.

THE ANNUNITY!

SUCH is the name of a grotesque and popular poem, or it may be called song, written by the late George Outram, and well known in the north. The fun of the piece consists in the complaint of a person who sold an annuity to a lady, who lived far beyond the usually allotted span of human nature. In one of the concluding verses we have a fine outburst of impatience on the longevity of the heroine :

The Bible says the age o' man
Threescore and ten perchance may be.
She's ninety-four. Let them wha can
Explain the incongruity.
She should ha'e lived afore the flood—
She's come o' Patriarchal blood—
She's some auld Pagan mummified
Alive for her annuity.

We make this quotation for a particular reason immediately to be seen. It may interest those who have derived amusement from hearing *The Annuity* sung, to know that among the papers of the late Dr Robert Chambers there were found verses purporting to be *The Annuitant's Answer*, written in a similar style of grim jocularity. They are as follows :

THE ANNUITANT'S ANSWER.

My certy, but it sets him weel,
Sae vile a tale to tell o' me!
I never could suspect the chiel
O' sic disingenuity.
I'll no be ninety-four for lang,
My health is far frae being strang,
And he'll mak profit, richt or wrang,
Ye'll see, by this annuity!

My friends, ye weel can understand,
This waird is fu' o' roguerie,

And ane meets fous on ilka hand,
To rug, and rive, and pu' at ye.
I thought that this same man o' law
Wad save my siller fræ them a',
And sae I gave the whillywha
A sum for an annuity.

He says the bargain lookit fair,
And sae to him I'm sure 'twad be;
I got my hunder pound a year,
And he could weel allow it me.
And does he think, the satan's limb,
Although I lookit auld and grim,
I was to die to pleasure him,
And squash my sma' annuity!

The year had scarcely turned its back,
When he was irking to be free—
A fule! the thing to undertake,
And then sae sure to rue it sae!
I've never been at peace sinsyne,
Nae wonder that sae sair I cryne,
It's just through terror that I tine
My life for my annuity.

He's twice had poison in my kale,
And sax times in my cup o' tea;
I could unfauld a shocking tale
O' something in a cruet, tae.
His arms he ance flang round my neck;
I thought it was to shaw respect;
He only meant to gie a check,
Not for, but to th' annuity.

Said ance to me an honest man :
'Try an insurance companie;
Ye'll find it an effective plan,
Protection to secure it ye.
Ten pounds a year—ye weel can spare 't—
Be that wi' gude Pate Fraser wared—
His office, syn, will be a guard
For you and your annuity!'

I gaed at ance and spak to Pate
'Bout a five-hunder policie—
'Indeed!' says he, 'ye are na blate,
To talk to me at sic a rate;
Wi' that chiel's fingers at the knife,
What chance ha'e ye o' length o' life?
Sae gae awa', ye silly wife,
Wi' you and your annuity!'

Alas, the worthy Fiscal's now
The only friend that I can see,
And it's sma' thing that he can do
To help my wee annuity:
But honest Maurice has agreed,
That, gin the villain does the deed,
He'll swing wi' a' becoming speed
For me and my annuity.